

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 361
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 2292

EMBASSIES FOR DEA
DEA HQS FOR ENOL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, HO
SUBJ: PROPOSED NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM FUNDING IN HONDURAS

REF: (A) STATE 75302, DTG 272306 MAR 78, (B) STATE 56149,
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THE EMBASSY SUBMITS THE FOLLOWING PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR
UTILIZATION OF AN ESTIMATED \$50,000 ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF
A STRONG NEW INITIATIVE BY THE GOH TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE
NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM. AS THE DEPARTMENT SUGGESTED, THE
EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO CONFORM WITH GUIDELINES CONTAINED
IN REFTEL B.

2. NARCOTICS SITUATION. HONDURAS HAS EMERGED SINCE SEP-
TEMBER 1977 AS AN IMPORTANT POINT FOR TRANSSHIPMENT OF
COCAIN AND MARIHUANA TO THE US AND AS A HAVEN FOR COCAINE
LABORATORIES AND NARCOTICS ORGANIZATIONS. IT WAS NOT EARLIER
CONSIDERED INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES DUE TO INADEQUATE
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GOH DATA COLLECTION AND CONTROLS AND TO THE ABSENCE OF RE-
PORTS FROM USG SOURCES LINKING HONDURAS TO ILLICIT NARCOTICS
ACTIVITIES. A SERIES OF INCIDENTS BEGINNING IN 1977 RE-
VEALED SIGNIFICANT ILLICIT ACTIVITY INVOLVING AIRCRAFT AND
MOTOR VESSELS OF HONDURAN AND OTHER REGISTRY OCCURRING IN
HONDURAS AND ADJACENT WATERS. THERE WERE SIGNS, ALSO, OF
INVOLVEMENT OF GOH OFFICIALS. DEA COSTA RICA THEREFORE

STEPPED UP ITS INVESTIGATIONS IN HONDURAS AND DESCRIBES THE CURRENT SITUATION AS FOLLOWS:

A. AT LEAST FIVE MAJOR NARCOTIC TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS ARE OPERATING IN THIS COUNTRY.

B. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COCAINE PROCESSING LABORATORIES.

C. VESSELS OF HONDURAN AND OTHER REGISTRY ARE TRANSPORTING MULTI-TON QUANTITIES OF MARIHUANA TO THE U.S. VIA HONDURAS AND OTHER CARIBBEAN ROUTES.

D. HUNDRED KILOGRAM QUANTITIES OF COCAINE ARE TRANSITING THE COUNTRY VIA LAND, SEA AND AIR.

E. U.S. REGISTERED AIRCRAFT ARE RECEIVING LARGE AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS IN HONDURAN TERRITORY FOR TRANSSHIPMENT TO THE U.S.

F. HONDURAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE IMPLICATED IN THE TRAFFICKING OF NARCOTICS.

G. MARIHUANA PLANTATIONS PRODUCE FOR LIMITED EXPORT TO THE U.S.

H. CULTIVATION OF OPIUM POPPIES IS SUSPECTED IN REMOTE AREAS BORDERING NICARAGUA.

I. DRUG ABUSE IS RAPIDLY GROWING WITHIN HONDURAS.

E. BECAUSE THE MORE SIGNIFICANT OF THESE ACTIVITIES INVOLVE HONDURAS AS A TRANSSHIPMENT POINT FOR LARGE QUANTITIES OF MARIHUANA AND COCAINE AND AS A HAVEN FOR TRAFFICKING OR-
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GANIZATIONS AND COCAINE LABORATORIES, OUR OVERALL PROGRAM GOAL SHOULD BE TO CURTAIL THE FLOW OF ILLICIT DRUGS VIA THIS COUNTRY TO THE U.S. THIS IS TO BE ACHIEVED BY COOPERATIVE INITIATIVES WITH THE GOH DESIGNED TO RESTRICT THIS FLOW BY STRENGTHENING THEIR NARCOTICS CONTROL CAPABILITIES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. LAW ENFORCEMENT

B. SURVEILLANCE

C. INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

D. INTERDICTION

4. THE FACT THAT HONDURAS HAS NOT HAD EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS CONTROL IN THESE AND OTHER AREAS IS CLEAR FROM THE ILLICIT ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN PARA TWO. THIS IS DUE TO ITS VAST AREAS WITH SPARSE POPULATION, LONG COAST LINE (OVER 300 MILES), NUMEROUS ISLANDS AND FISHING BANKS (EXTENDING OVER 400 MILES), PAST LACK OF A PATROL CAPABILITY, LACK UNTIL APRIL 1978 OF A STRONG TRAFFICKING LAW, FRAGMENTATION OF THE CONTROL FUNCTION AMONG THE POLICE (FUSEP), INVESTIGATIVE DEPARTMENT (DIN) AND CUSTOMS (HACIENDA). IT WAS NO LONGER FEASIBLE TO WORK WITH THESE AGENCIES DUE TO INTERNAL CORRUPT-

TION. EARLY EMBASSY AND DEA INITIATIVES WITH GOH AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO SECURE COOPERATION IN ESTABLISHING A NEW NARCOTICS CONTROL GROUP ARE DESCRIBED IN REFTEL B. THE GOH HAS RESPONDED BY ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT NARCOTICS GROUP HAVING OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ILLICIT DRUG CONTROL ACTIVITIES AND WHICH REPORTS DIRECTLY TO THE CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE GOH ALSO IN APRIL 1978 PROMULGATED A STRONG NARCOTICS LAW AND BEGAN INVESTIGAING CORRUPTION. AS A RESULT, SEVERAL KEY FUSEP, DIN AND CUSTOMS OFFICERS HAVE BEEN REPLACED. THIS NEW GROUP ALREADY HAS 20 HAND-PICKED PERSONS, AND IT IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING EQUIPPED, ORGANIZED AND ORIENTED IN OFFICES OF THE ARMED FORCES HEAD-QUARTERS.

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5. ALTHOUGH THIS PROMPT RESPONSE IN ESTABLISHING ANEW NARCOTICS GROUP REFLECTS A STRONG GOH COMMITMENT TO NARCOTICS CONTROL, CONSIDERABLE TRAINING, EQUIPMENT, TECHNICAL ADVICE AND FUNDING WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAKE THE GROUP FULLY OPERATIONAL. THE EARLY AVAILABILITY OF \$50,000 TO SUPPORT THESE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 2292

EMBASSIES FOR DEA
DEA HQS FOR ENOL

GOH INITIATIVES WOULD HELP TO SUSTAIN MOMENTUM, PERMIT THE GROUP'S GOING OPERATIONAL SOONER AND ENHANCE ITS EFFECTIVENESS. THIS SUM WOULD BE UTILIZED FOR PROCURING VEHICLES (\$25,000); COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT (\$3,000); INVESTIGATIVE EQUIPMENT SUCH AS CAMERAS, BINOCULARS, TEST KITS AND SL UNIT (\$5,000); SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING EXPENSES AND PERSONNEL DURING IN-COUNTRY TRAVEL (\$10,000); AND FOR AN INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM TO REWARD OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATE PERSONNEL TO DIRECT THEIR EFFORTS AGAINST MAJOR VIOLATORS (\$7,000). IF FUNDING PERMITS, RECOMMEND CREATION OF A CANINE DETECTION CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT INTERDICTION EFFORTS.

6. THIS UTILIZATION OF THE FUNDING WOULD HELP TO STRENGTHEN THE SPECIAL NARCOTICS GROUP'S EFFECTIVENESS IN THE FOUR AREAS OF NEED IDENTIFIED IN PARA 3 ABOVE. THE NEED DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO EASY CATEGORIZATION OF PROJECTS. CONTROL OF ALL FUNDS WOULD BE HELD JOINTLY BY THE EMBASSY AND DEA OFFICERS, RATHER THAN TURNING THEM OVER TO THE NARCOTICS GROUP. BY RETAINING CONTROL THE EMBASSY COULD ENSURE THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPENDITURES WERE BEING USED TO ATTAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND TO AID IN EVALUATING PROGRESS. EMBASSY NARCOTICS COMMITTEE WOULD MEET QUARTERLY TO REVIEW PROGRESS AND EXERCISE TIME-PHASED CONTROL.

7. THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED OPERATIONS OF THE NARCOTICS GROUP ILLUSTRATES HOW THE OPERATING EXPENSES WOULD BE EMPLOYED. A CENTRAL NARCOTICS UNIT OF APPROXIMATELY 15 PERSONS COULD BE BASED IN TEGUCIGALPA AND HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY. IT WOULD BE MOBILE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SMALLER UNITS IN OTHER LOCATIONS (PUERTO CORTES OF SAN PEDRO SULA AND LA CEIBA). EACH UNIT WOULD ESTABLISH SURVEILLANCE AND INTERDICTION PROGRAMS AT AIRPORTS, SEAPORTS AND FRONTIER TRANSIT POINTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS. THEY WOULD ALSO IDENTIFY CLANDESTINE AIRFIELDS, MARIHUANA AND POPPY CULTIVATION, PENETRATE KNOWN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS AND COLLECT INFORMATION ON THEIR ACTIVITIES REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE INTERDICTION. AS THE HONDURAS NAVY DEVELOPS ITS PATROL AND COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITY ALONG THE NORTH COAST AND OFFSHORE ISLANDS AND KEYS DURING THE REMAINDER OF 1978, OFFSHORE AND ON-SHORE TRANSSHIPMENT OPERATIONS WOULD BE INTERDICTIONED, AS WELL IN THESE ACTIVITIES WILL REQUIRE PERSONNEL OF THE NARCOTICS GROUPS TO SPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME AWAY FROM THEIR HOMES AND ENTAIL OPERATING EXPENSES. THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS UNDER EMBASSY/DEA CONTROL WOULD ENABLE IT TO INDUCE THE HONDURAS NARCOTICS GROUP TO DO MORE FIELD SURVEILLANCE AND INTERDICTION WORK.

8. INITIAL ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF THE NARCOTICS GROUP
WILL BE PERFORMED IN-COUNTRY BY DEA OFFICERS. PERSONNEL
WILL THEN BE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF PERFORMANCE FOR FUR-
THER TRAINING IN THE U.S. IT IS PROPOSED THAT TRAINING
SLOTS BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS, BUT IF THE
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NEED ARISES THAT A SMALL PART OF THE \$50,000 WOULD BE
AVAILABLE FOR TRAINING AND RELATED TRAVEL.
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